

Desktop Statement  
Sunnyside Gold Letter

On January 5, 2015, the EPA, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment jointly sent a letter to Sunnyside Gold Corporation inviting the company to actively assist in investigating sources of mining related contamination in the Animas River near Silverton, Colo. In the letter, EPA, BLM and CDPHE asked the company to develop and implement work plans to investigate and address contamination at the Mayflower Mill and Tailings area and the American Tunnel at Gladstone.

EPA, BLM and CDPHE appreciate Sunnyside Gold's efforts to identify a path forward for remedying water quality impairments in the Upper Animas River watershed. In April 2014, the company outlined a "Game Plan" to improve water quality and habitats in the Animas River. The first step in that plan is to "continue to gather the requisite knowledge to understand the problem." Consistent with that approach, and the importance of understanding watershed conditions as a prerequisite for identifying practical and effective cleanup strategies, the letter asks the company to assess impairment and contamination sources in Cement Creek and the Upper Animas River.

This science is needed to identify the potential solutions that will be considered by agency partners and the communities affected by degraded water quality. While significant analytical work has been done to assess water quality in Cement Creek, current evidence suggests that water quality impairments in the Animas River are more far reaching than originally understood. As a result, EPA, BLM and CDPHE have determined that the Upper Animas River above Cement Creek, and its drainages, must also be investigated to ensure the development of cleanup options that are efficient, effective, and based on a comprehensive understanding of water quality and contamination sources in the watershed.

EPA, BLM and CDPHE are requesting that Sunnyside Gold assist with these investigations, because the company has specific experience with the Mayflower Mill and Tailings area and the American Tunnel.

EPA, BLM and CDPHE look forward to working with Sunnyside Gold to advance the science that will provide a sound foundation for cleanup options to improve water quality in the Animas River.